

A
SMALL WHOLE-LENGTH
OF
DR. PRIESTLEY, *J. LL.D.*
FROM HIS PRINTED WORKS:

OR
A FREE ACCOUNT,
(IN CONSEQUENCE OF A FREE INQUIRY,)

OF
HIS STYLE. HIS LOGIC.
HIS POLITICS. HIS RELIGION.
HIS FEELINGS. HIS PHILOSOPHY.

CONCLUDING WITH AN ANALYSIS,

AND AN
APPENDIX

OF
EXTRACTS FROM THE WRITINGS OF DR.
PRIESTLEY, WHICH WERE READ IN
COURT AT THE ASSIZES AT WARWICK.

MENS CUJUSQUE, IS EST QUISQUE. CICERO.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR F. AND C. RIVINGTON, ST. PAUL'S
CHURCH-YARD. MDCXCII.



A
PREFATORY EPISTLE

TO THE

REVEREND Mr. H——D.

DEAR SIR,

THE celebrated Dr. *Priestley* having long presented to the world a character new and curious in its kind, you expressed a desire, that a portrait of him might be taken from his works, and given to the public upon a small scale.

In consequence of what had passed, the writer of the following pages, having some acquaintance with the Doctor's publications, sat down to a sketch of his *whole-length*; which, being verified by proper authorities, may be considered as a piece *taken from the life*. He has employed some pains to make the *drawing* correct, and he hopes the *colours* will *stand*: that if the Doctor's writings should hereafter be scarce, (as it is conjectured they will be) people may know what he *was*.

With

With the *outward tabernacle* of Dr. Priestley he has no concern; but with *that* Dr. Priestley only, which is to be found in books and pamphlets to a very great amount: *mens cujusque is est quisque*: and if the present exhibition of him to the connoisseurs, at the usual price of *one shilling* a-piece, shall furnish you (or nearly so) with the thing you wished for, and convey to the public a *just* idea at a *small* expence, I shall be happy, that in a time of leisure, while the town is empty, I could turn my pencil to the present subject.

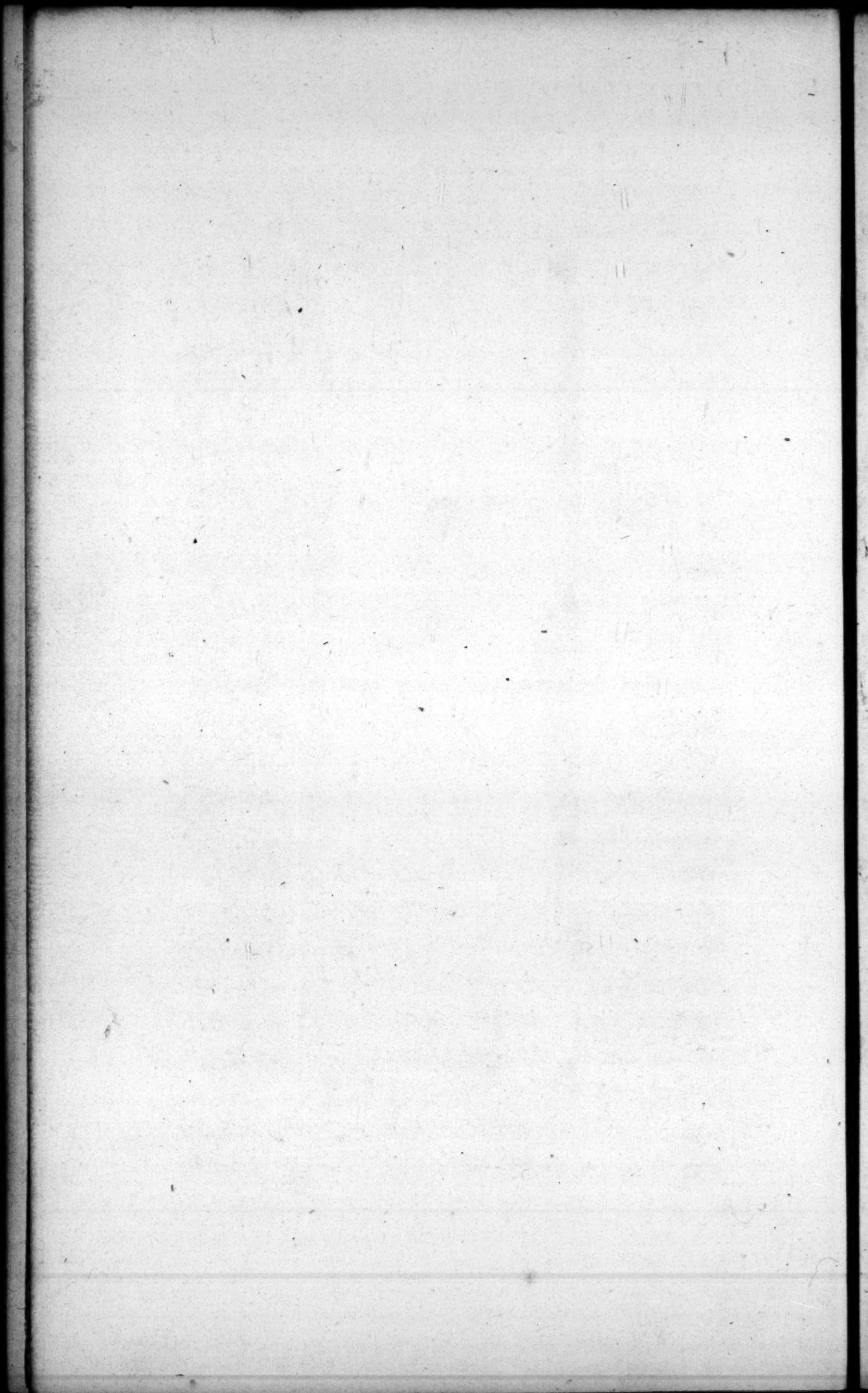
What have you and I lived to see! a *stay-maker* of *Thetford*, and a *Dissenting teacher* of *Birmingham*, called upon to take their share of the government in that city, which in the last age affected universal monarchy! Thus was *Babylon* once the mistress of the world: but if we should go to look for it *now*, the Prophet tells us, we shall find *a nest of owls*. When you think on these things, you will not forget

Your affectionate Brother

and humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

The only Autograph of Dr Priestley ^{here} is
dated 1764, and though more carefully written
is certainly very like the notes in this book
After an interval of nearly 30 years there might
be expected to be some change in the hand.
On the whole I sh^d say probably in his handwriting.
W. G. W.



SMALL WHOLE-LENGTH

I. *The Style and Learning of Dr. Priestley.*

OF what kind soever our sentiments may be, on subjects of religion and literature, the manner in which they are delivered is of so much consequence, that when an author is spoken of, we generally enquire in the first place, *how he writes*. The work which first made Dr. *Priestley* more extensively known to the public, was his *History of Electricity*. Let any reader of judgment cast his eye over the preface to that history, and he will be shocked with the affectation and poverty of his diction. There is such a

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jumble

jumble of *scenes, prospects, objects* and *ideas*, as render his style boyish and ridiculous. The word *Views*, which occurs ten times in a few paragraphs, would never have been permitted to stand, if the writer had understood how to revise and correct his own language. We are told (p. 1.) of *pleasing objects according to all the genuine and universal principles of taste, deduced from a knowledge of human nature—of objects throwing a pleasing idea upon scenes: which is profound nonsense*; though the author probably took it for fine writing.

When he produces himself as the champion of his party against Mr. *Burke*, the poor lame English which he presents to the supreme critical eye of that learned gentleman, becomes more remarkable and offensive—*What I have more particularly replied to is what he has advanced, &c.* and again (p. 2.) *there is nothing extraordinary in this revolution having excited, &c.* In a plain unassuming person, of little education, such mistakes might be considered as vernacular oversights; but when they come from a teacher of eloquence, who writes books upon rhetoric, they take a very different character.

As

As to Dr. *Priestley's* skill in the learned languages, there is a vast appearance of it in his voluminous writings; but in the critical analysis of Greek and Latin, he is ill-grounded and injudicious; infomuch that any well-trained scholar will soon find out that he was never put into proper possession of school-learning. The Bishop of St. *David's* (then Archdeacon of St. *Alban's*) charges him with gross blunders, even to the mistaking of a passage, *the sense of which was hardly to be missed at first sight by a school-boy in his second year of Greek.* (Tracts, p. 101.) When any man does *his best*, candour will be ready to make the most of him; but when such a person holds in contempt and defiance his adversaries, who are better learned, he has then no longer any claim upon our candour or politeness, but deserves to be held up to the public in his true colours; more especially, if any evil purpose is to be promoted amongst the ignorant and the disaffected by his pretensions to superior learning. None of Dr. *Priestley's* principles are more mischievous in their intention than his political: we shall therefore begin with a short sketch of his politics from his own writings.

B 2

II. The

How can a person who writes such profound nonsense and so unintelligible possibly be mischievous? -

has he proved this charge?

II. *The Politics of Dr. Priestley.*

HIS system is briefly this. To gain clear ideas, as he tells us, he supposes (in common with some higher authors who ought to have known better) a *state of nature*, in which every individual is possessed of *natural liberty*, part of which he resigns into a common stock, out of which arises that power of *directing the conduct of others*, which we call *government*. This scheme, even at first sight, must be false: because, out of liberty, nothing can arise but liberty: whereas government is a *power of restraining*, and power must arise out of power, not out of liberty, for this is the antagonist of power; and accordingly, all those busy gentlemen who are now striving *against* government, call themselves the *friends of liberty*. The principle which dissolves government can never be the principle out of which it arises; and the case is so plain that a child may see it.

This absurdity, however, runs through all our author's politics; in which, as occasion requires, he substitutes *power* and *liberty* for one

one another. Thus doth he begin his fundamental definition.—*Political liberty consists in the power which the members of the state reserve to themselves of arriving at public offices, &c.* (Essay on the first Pr. of Gov. p. 9.) Here liberty is confounded with the power of governing; that is, of *restraining liberty*; and we reckon a writer who is loose in a definition, to be either cloudy in his understanding, or fraudulent in his intention; a swindler in reasoning, who takes up what he has not fairly purchased.

When the Doctor's principles are brought together and compared, the perplexity is obvious. He distinguishes (for *clearness*, as he observes) liberty into *political* and *civil*; making the latter a power over our *own* actions, and the former a power over the actions of *others*; that is, a power of *ruling*, and a power of *not being ruled*; which in effect leave all power *in equilibrio*; and so amount to nothing. His two sorts of *liberty* are evidently two sorts of *power*, which annihilate each other: and all this is *for clearness*. *sophistry* *Palpable*.

He farther asserts (p. 12.) that "as every man retains, and can never be deprived of his natural right of relieving himself from all oppression; that is, from every thing that has been imposed upon him without his own consent; this must be the only true and proper foundation of all the governments subsisting in the world." Which means in plainer English, that the only proper foundation of government is the power of overturning government; which he calls *relieving ourselves from oppression*; and a power this is which may be turned against the ten commandments; for these having been imposed upon us without our own consent, (it being certain that we had no hand in the making of them) are consequently, by Dr. Priestley's rule, *an oppression. which priests alone feel not*—

It is another of his fundamental maxims, that kings, senators and nobles are to all intents the servants of the public, and accountable to the people: (p. 23.) which principle, when transferred from the body civil to the body natural, asserts the headship of the feet and toes; which is very good sense when our meaning is to turn the world upside down.

If a Company of Gentlemen, ^{or Merchants} in trade appoint a Clerk to do their business, he becomes their Master, Excellent logic!!

If it be our intention to overturn establishments, we must advance such principles as will promote the great work of decomposition. But decomposition, as we find by experience, is an experiment attended with some loss. When chymists undertake to analyze, a subtile principle evaporates, which can never be restored: and this extends by analogy to other cases. It is easy to take a man to pieces; but life escapes in the experiment, and the man can never be put together any more. Every legal government is a composition, of which God, by his laws and his providence, makes himself a part; the animating part, which gives energy and effect to the whole. When this is lost, on a dissolution of the state, and of laws human and divine, it is not in the power of man to restore it. There may be a thing framed which will call itself a government; but it will have no authority nor stability, because it is built upon a loose bottom. Cruelty and revenge will take the place of penal, and robbery and sacrilege of distributive justice; and a thousand other evils will happen, which all good men will deprecate,

B 4

because

*That government only is legal which best
consults the happiness of the governed —
happiness consists in proper Liberty —*

because none but evil men can be gainers by them; and they only in appearance; for the whole is a deception and a phantom.

Our author's political casuistry is as curious as his principles. He has one measure for us and another for himself. In his Letters to Mr. *Burke* he lays it down, that we have *no business to find fault with the French* for what they have thought proper to do in their own affairs, (p. 3.) But if it be a good rule to let our neighbours alone in managing for themselves, how comes it that the Doctor is so busy and so severe a critic upon the Church of England, a society to which he does not belong? and why were he and his friends so zealous to celebrate the French Revolution? Why is he, who is a stranger, at liberty to applaud and give his sanction to their proceedings: if we, who are also strangers, are not at liberty to censure them? It will never be a matter of indifference whether vice or virtue prevail in the world: the cause of the French, in this view of it, is the cause of mankind. The Doctor and his friends obliged us to consider whether the French had done right or wrong,

because they persuaded us to do the same thing at home: and ~~their~~ motions toward it alarmed the ^{priests who alarmed the} people at Birmingham, and occasioned all those disturbances, the causes of which are as well understood by the Doctor himself as by any person in this kingdom.

The French nation were at liberty, he says, to *better their condition* without consulting us. But here again, the Doctor's casuistry is as loose as before: for no man can be justified in bettering his condition, unless he does it *by lawful means*. If a man betters his condition out of the *property and lives* of his fellow-subjects, he is a felon and a murderer; and, as Dr. Franklin rightly observed, it makes no difference whether this be done by a *single person* or by a *larger gang*, or by one half of a nation against the other half.

There may be some worthy persons, who, although they look up to Dr. Priestley as a great political casuist, are not above being admonished. Let them consider calmly, what is in a manner self-evident, that all vice is from the liberty of human action; all *virtue* from

the
*Then at present all VICE is confined to
 the rich, and VIRTUE to the poor; or,
 vice to the governors, and VIRTUE
 to the governed*

the *restraints* either of law or conscience. So far as restraint is from the law of God, it cannot be opposed. But of this law, no account is made by Dr. *Priestley* or his followers: and if they are plotting to overturn establishments, as they openly profess, it is proper they should keep it out of sight: for the moment it is introduced, all their fairy edifices fall to pieces like a house of cards. That man must be an atheist or an infidel, who forgets that there is a foundation of law, by which all men are bound, in their relation to God and to one another; and that the ten commandments are made for men in a state of *inequality*. In the new subject of human Right, the ignorant may think there is a *pro* and a *con* of argument against argument: but the whole is a dispute between the duties of religion and the claims of atheism; all of which are answered for ever in this one short sentence—

- x NO MAN HATH A RIGHT TO DO WRONG.
 How their plots will succeed in time, it may be impossible to foresee; but, I think, before the party of republicans and unitarians will succeed in this country, they must provide a political manager not so much given to betray and contradict himself as Dr. Priestley:

+ 2 Quistsm - Quing. what is wrong?

ley : who in one page assures us, that unitarians are *as good subjects* as trinitarians ; and in an adjoining page, that they are *laying gunpowder, grain by grain, under the old building of error and superstition, which a single spark may hereafter enflame**. This open unguarded temper, which lays a plot, and then tells ~~it~~ to every body, has brought the Doctor into great miscarriages, and was undoubtedly the cause of all the losses he suffered at Birmingham. *Nonentity. or nonsense.*

III. Of the Feelings of Dr. Priestley.

THE Doctor's feelings are very unaccountable, being totally disproportionate, and sometimes quite of a contrary nature to their causes. He tells us how the *sudden union* of Mr. Burke and Lord North filled him *with horror*, (Lett. to Mr. Burke, p. 6.) If an unlooked-for coalition in the ministry goes to court, to manage public business, he is troubled with *the horrors* ; but he can hear of captive kings, of plots, massacres, confiscations, and sacrilege, and find all these things

* Free Inq. p. 40—45.

not only agreeable, but consistent with celebrity and festivity. He mocks at the humanity of Mr. Burke, for being *alarmed* and *disturbed* at the late horrible commotions in France. This worthy gentleman, blessed with the tender feelings of a polished mind, and concerned for the peace of the christian world, did look with abhorrence on the confusion, inhumanity, and felony of the French Revolution ; and therefore justly and pathetically exclaimed against it, as a most wicked and cruel transaction. At all this Dr. Priestley wonders ; and says—you are *alarmed*—you are not *cool*—your mind is *beated*, &c. &c. The contrast here is a little striking : The one, with the heart of a man and a christian, feels, as the attending chaplain would, at a miserable execution ; while the other stands by with all the indifference of the hangman ; considering only what he and his party may get by it ; and how the catastrophe may serve to promote his own political ideas.

The power of kings and rulers is designed by providence as a *terror to evil doers* ; so the
gospel

gospel teaches : and a terror it is, which seems to lie very hard upon Dr. *Priestley* ; but if the law of providence be inverted, and the terror happen to fall backwards, upon kings and rulers themselves, then he has his wish. He rejoices when they are *made to tremble*, as if it were a delicious circumstance : “ It is time,” says he, “ that they, who have made others tremble, (i. e. who have been a *terror to evil-doers*) should in their turn tremble themselves. But let the *people* rejoice.” (Let. to Mr. *Burke*, p. 40.) The two great *red letter* festivals of Dr. *Priestley*’s year (kalender’d with *blood*) are the 30th of January and the 14th of July. “ Let all tyrants read the history of both,” says he, “ and *tremble*.” We shall rarely meet with any instance of a flaming advocate for liberty, who does not, through all the disguise of his fair words, discover the spirit of a tyrant. If I had no other reason for detesting our Doctor’s politics, this alone would be sufficient, that they deliver us over to an unmerciful mind, and even invert the passions natural to man : so that when the world is in tears, we are preparing for a feast ; like vultures, when they smell slaughter at a distance : and, in the sunshine of peaceable times, like

Spenser’s

*Spenser's fiend, which chews a toad, we weep,
that cause of weeping there is none.*

When a man denies his own conduct to those who are witnesses of it, and expects to be believed; whatever that man may call himself, we generally agree to call him *impudent*. Has not our Doctor, for many years past, been libelling the religion and the clergy of the Church of England; predicting ruin to the government, and recommending a new one after the model of France; calling our religious establishment, a *fungus*, a *sloth*, a *glutton*; and threatening it with a destructive explosion from the gunpowder, which he and his friends have been conveying under the fabric? Yet the man who had said all these things, and many more, (for which see the collection in the *Appendix*.) tells the inhabitants of *Birmingham*, they had *uniform experience* of his *peaceable behaviour* for eleven years. (See *Thoughts on the late Riots at Birmingham*, p. 7.)

His Letter to Mr. Pitt displays a degree of assurance rarely to be met with. When a man, in this country, writes a saucy letter to
a mi-

a minister of state, there is nothing prodigious in the case: but if he does this in defiance of all decency, and puts his name to it, as Dr. Priestley did, he glories in his shame; which a man seldom does, till he is past the feeling of it. Tell him his creed gives him a near alliance to the *Turks*; he is not abashed at it; but considers it rather as a favourable circumstance; telling us how the *Turks* are in a fair way to become Christians, because they are Unitarians. "You are mistaken," says he, in his Letter to Mr. Parkhurst, "if you think that I am ashamed to avow my agreement with the Mahometans, or any other of the human race, in the doctrine of the divine unity, and to worship together with them the one God and Father of all, the Maker of heaven and earth." (Letters, p. 185.) Whether it be the Reverend Mr. Parkhurst then, or any other worthy gentleman, who shall suspect that the Doctor
 x is weak enough to be ashamed; he has reason, from the Doctor's own authority, to retract his suspicions.

No man is not ashamed to think and speak
 the truth with any man!

x ashamed! eye of truth. Dr Priestly is not ashamed
 of truth — but if the truth was known I
 know many Priestly Doctors who VI. Of
 would have reason to be ashamed!

IV. *The Logic of Dr. Priestley.*

WHEN a writer has a good cause, and understands it well, his defence of it will be plain and rational: but if his cause be bad, and too weak to support itself, he will apply to the arts of false logic, which we call *sophistry*; and, as we say, will try to *persuade people out of their senses*. Dr. Priestley has been celebrated for his abilities: and I am convinced he is a man of parts, when I see the ingenuity and variety of his subterfuges. When the case is desperate, and we see him sinking; he is never at a loss for some shift to keep his head above water. One of his artifices is, to dazzle the eyes of his readers with a splendid idea of his own powers. The multitude of his volumes, and the expedition with which he writes, are favourite topics, and frequently alluded to; whence the public is to believe, that he is greater than other men, because he writes *faster*; and that he writes unanswerably, because he writes *without end*. It is a common evasion with him, to find fault with the qualifications of his antagonists: none of them are the right sort of men: so instead of answering

Who art
 thou? Mr.
 Anonymous?

answering their arguments, he amuses his readers with reflexions on their learning and abilities: and the world is to infer, how powerfully he would confute and display his superior skill in the science of defence, if he could but meet with a proper opponent. But unfortunately they are all of the wrong sort; so he treats with contempt all that are past, and with defiance all that are to come; assuring the public, that the greatest coward may think himself a match for the orthodox—I have reconnoitred the force of the enemy, and I see nothing that can daunt the most timid—I want to see their Goliath—Thus doth the Doctor flourish his pen over the heads of us weak churchmen, in the spirit of a prize-fighter. In the same vapouring strain, he calls Dr. Horsley, the present Bishop of St. David's, a *boastful Champion*, so confuted and baffled by himself, *that all the encomiums and encouragements of his friends cannot bring him into the field again.* (Letters to the Dean of Cant. p. 3.) Here we have a specimen of the language of the cockpit, applied to a dignity of the church, and a controversy in divinity. The case is this: If persons of better

C ' learning

confute & display his skill? What does that mean?

a white lie!

learning and more manners leave him to himself, because they find it is to no purpose to argue with him; he reports, that they have ran away, and left him in possession of the field. He puts a like interpretation upon the pious conduct of Dr. *Horne*. This most amiable of men, when Dean of *Canterbury*, preached an exhortatory sermon on the duty of *contending earnestly for the faith*: which exhortation Dr. *Priestley* very ingeniously interprets into the voice of distress: as if all his opponents were confuted, and the good Dean crying out for *more help*; the Champion of Socinianism had got them all down, and was belabouring them at his mercy. Much of the Doctor's logic consists in boasting and defiance. He therefore tells the world, the defenders of orthodoxy have no dependence but on the *act of William and Mary*, which he calls the *real Goliath in this business*. (*Free Enquiry*, p. 80.) But Dr. *Priestley* knows this Goliath has never been produced, because, so far as argument is wanted, we find ourselves able to do without it. But, if to apply to *other aids*, is tacitly to confess our weakness in point of argument; how comes *he* to

to depend, so much as he does, on the foreign helps of railing blustering and terrifying? This impertinent application to the force of ill words, I call his Act of William and Mary, which he is putting into execution on every occasion; and therefore, by his own rule, he is under a state of conscious inability and confutation. *

*Terrifying
truth will
come out.*

There is a sophistry in defying the laws made for the support of religion, which few people can see through. From their non execution, it is argued, that we are ashamed of them, as being sensible they are the fences of falsehood. It is likewise suspected that the Socinians are courting persecution, and wish the laws to be put in force against themselves: but this can never be the case with those men who make so great a shew of their impunity; and are so frequently turning it into an argument in their favour. In truth, their logic will be a match for us either way: if the laws are executed, then it is because we have no argument: if they are not executed, then it is because we are afraid it should be seen that we have no argument: so

* *I say, Dr Priestley^{C²} is a rascal & therefore must be hanged —
Admirable! Logician! convincing
reasoner!*

they have us at bay in either case. The experience of the world tells us, on the one side, that impunity begets licentiousness: and prudence teaches, on the other, that penal laws should never be executed, if lighter methods are found sufficient. Our laws in support of religion, were not intended to exclude fair and reasonable argument; their use is to repress insolence and outrage; and to secure the peace of the *state*; which never thought itself secure with subjects, who boldly deny the Godhead of Jesus Christ, and teach the people to do the same. If there is any proper object of such a law, it is the man, who, when he *should* be arguing, falls to *blaspheming*: who, because he is not able to confute, alarms the minds of his readers with the prospect of being soon overpowered by numbers, or destroyed by some sudden and unforeseen explosion, for which he and his friends have so long been preparing the materials. I leave Dr. *Priestley* to look into the writings of modern controversialists, and see if he can find a person of that description.

Another

Another of the Doctor's arts, is to impose upon his readers with unfair samples. Thus, if an adversary should lay upon him a dozen x
x hard names, of which eleven should be true, and the twelfth doubtful; he will pick out the last, and hold it up to the public as a specimen of all the rest. In this way he can answer a large book before breakfast; by taking a few passages without their dependences, and then boasting that he has confuted the whole work.

x *No abuse Hall* *"No abuse Hall none!"*

But Dr. Priestley never displays his sophistry to greater advantage, than when he undertakes to evade the force of a text of scripture, which is very often necessary, from the part he has unhappily taken in divinity. The scripture asserts plainly of Jesus Christ, that *all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist*. Col. viii. 16. Now behold the answer to this plain positive scripture—"I would only observe," says the Doctor, "that neither the earth, nor the sun, moon or stars, nor any material substance, is specified among the things created by him." (See Letters, p. 119.) So *all things* signify

none of these things, because none of them are particularly mentioned. To rid himself of the argument for the pre-existence and divinity of Christ from the act of creation, &c. he supposes, that as Christ is said to have reconciled the world as well as created it, *created* and *reconciled* may well be supposed to be synonymous: so that if a man *reconciles* two neighbours at variance, he may be said to have *created* them. I beg the reader to review p. 118, 119, 120 of his letters to Dr. Price, as a specimen of Unitarian logic and divinity; such as the learned Bishop of St. David's might well run away from; but not because he is beaten out of the field.

Garbling garbling! quote further if you dare!

by whom? We prove the divinity of our blessed Saviour, by shewing that the same *divine acts* are ascribed to Him as to God; and as the Almighty is demonstrated by the works of omnipotence, the argument will never be answered. But nothing is too hard for Dr. Priestley; who replies, that this argument will prove *God and Satan to be the same being*; because it is said of *David*, that *God* moved him to number the people; and in another place that *Satan* tempted him. But the Doctor,

Doctor, who writes very *fast*, cannot stop on such occasions to make proper distinctions: all he aims at is, to make a little appearance, and get off as soon as he can. Temptation is no *divine act*; which is the thing always supposed in the argument he is answering. God, or man, or even Satan himself, may be said to *tempt*, if regard be had to the *sense* in which it is spoken: but God and Satan are never said either to have created the world or to have saved it. Such, however, is the style of criticism, which Dr. Priestley has opposed to Mr. Jones's Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity. (See his *Letters to Students in the Universities*.)

*read
genesis.*

*Roman
catholic.*

When a man is what we call a *Proteus*, he can transform himself from one shape to another, and assume any temper, to serve the present purpose; he can be audacious when he is in fear; pleased when he is vexed; glad when he is sorry; and compassionate while he is gratified with another's misery. Our Doctor *rejoices* in the orthodox defences of the church of England, because, as he informs my Lords the Bishops, they will *hasten its destruction*. He is glad that his property

C 4 *some* and

*When a man is what priests would make him,
he is the most contemptible reptile that the
sun shines upon!*

and his life were attacked, because this *does honour to his writings*; his adversaries having found this the only way of answering them. Every thing makes *for* him, which we should suppose to be *against* him. He boasts, that the Unitarians are *more obliged* to Dr. Horsley, than to any Trinitarian: but for *what*, no mortal can tell, unless it be for detecting and exposing them past remedy to the world. The design of all this is, to make the writers of the church believe, that notwithstanding all their efforts, they do and will write to no good purpose; rather to a *bad* one; and that they may as well give it up, and leave the Doctor unmolested in corrupting our faith, and deluding the people, till the grand plot of total subversion shall be ripe for execution.

miserable flattery!

I shall trouble the reader but with one more of his sophisms; which is that of his insinuating so frequently as he does, that the age in which we live is greatly enlightened. Every monitor who advises us to become wiser than we are deserves to be heard: but his meaning is, that we ought not to be contented with the faith of our forefathers, because we know some new things of which
our

our forefathers were ignorant. The argument is altogether impertinent and inconsequential: but weak minds, and young scholars, whose vanity grows faster than their wisdom, may be influenced by it. The age, it is true, has found out some new experiments in philosophy; and have acquired some new ideas in natural history: but what then? what is this to our religion? Have we found out a
 x new bible? If we get forward in learning, is that any reason why we should go backward in divinity? There are, to be sure, some curious discoveries of late years, and we cannot deny it. Our new vellum paper, which goes by the name of the wove paper, is of a quality and substance much superior to the paper made in former years: but if all Dr. Priestley's improvements in theology, with all his interpretations of the scripture, were written upon it, the blank paper of the last century would be a better thing in the library of an Englishman. The present reformers of France call themselves the *illuminated*: but they were a people of more worth and wisdom with their old darkness about them, than with their new light; which, like a *coup de soleil* upon their brain, has put them out of their

wits;

Did Calvin or Martin Luther find out a
new bible?

wits ; and made them, what Dr. *Priestley's* principles would soon make us, if they should be generally admitted, madmen, scalpers, and cannibals.

V. *The Religion of Dr. Priestley.*

DR. *Priestley's* religion must be described differently from that of other men : all by negatives ; for he has taken great pains to shew us what he is *not*. The truth of religion is nothing yet known, but something that will be found out, if there be but *discussion* enough ; and therefore discussion is what he is constantly recommending. There is to be no establishment of any kind ; but all *discussion*, *discussion* ; and the end of it, a right understanding of religion. Every person who is strongly possessed with any persuasion, of which he has no proof, is an enthusiast or fanatic, Dr. *Priestley* comes fairly under this description, because he turns prophet without his credentials. “ *Whatever was the beginning of this world, says he, “ the end of it will be glorious and paradisaical, beyond what our imaginations can now conceive ; the contemplation of which always makes me happy.*” (Essay on Gov. p. 5.) How this will come to pass the
Doctor

Doctor to be sure knows; but we can only conjecture from his example; who, as he tells us himself, was once what we commonly call a *Christian*, but what he calls a *Trinitarian*; then he was a *high Arian*; then a *low* *Arian*, like his friend Dr. Price; then he *mean!* *x* became a *Socinian*, and that, as he confesses, of the *lowest kind*. (Letters, p. 101.) All these changes are in a progress of descent; the Doctor is a falling body all the way. We may judge from this his progress toward paradisaical felicity, what the end will be: men will believe less and less all the way, as he has done, till they come to *paradise* and believe nothing at all. The learned have held many arguments about the situation of paradise; but thus much we learn now for certain, that the road to paradise is downwards. *mean wit.*

In his capacity of a prophet, he tells us what wonderful things will come to pass in consequence of the French revolution. His 14th letter to Mr. *Burke* is such a curiosity upon this subject, that I wish the reader would peruse the whole. He will there discover, what a new and happy creation is to arise out of the French chaps. Religion shall no longer

* As much as to say, that Religion & truth are different things! too often they are so!

[28]

* longer be established, but truth will establish itself—Governments will all be rectified, when the superstitious respect paid to *kings* and *priests* shall vanish: all contention for power shall cease, and differences will no longer be determined by the sword: the grand secret is discovered of living without war. Religious disputes will be at an end; because *so great a majority will be of one opinion that the minority will see the necessity of giving way.* The *one opinion* is, his own opinion, Socinianism of the lowest kind; and the thing which is to be overpowered by numbers, and *give way*, is the Christian persuasion: and thus he provides for the preservation of religious liberty to us all. Some must decide, and the rest must *give way*, and then every man will, as the Doctor has it, *provide religion for himself.* How ignorant would this world be, if there were not prophets to enlighten it! I would not, however, depend absolutely on the Doctor's infallibility. For when he wrote his letters to Mr. *Burke*, he foresaw the approaching downfall of that *nuisance* (p. 128.) that *old and decayed building* (129.) the Church of England, from the rapid increase of the Dissenters, and particularly

larly of those at *Birmingham*. But how little do prophets sometimes foresee! The fable tells us, how the astrologer, gazing at the stars and foretelling the fate of empires, did not foresee, that he himself was falling into a ditch: even so, that ruin which the Doctor had so plainly and so positively predicted to the *old building*, fell unfortunately upon the *new meeting-house*, and upon his own dwelling. How active the Doctor might be at that time in promoting the ruin he had in prospect, he knows better than we do: but instead of being so weak as to take any thing to himself, he persists in laying all the blame upon the clergy of Birmingham. Yet he has not made it appear in a single instance, that any person of
 x character had a share in the mischief of the late riots: it rather appears to have originated totally with the undistinguishing vulgar: who seeing their country menaced by some alarming motions toward a French revolution in England, and not approving it, very unadvisedly took the preservative justice of the time into their own hands, Persons of more refined understandings act differently. When they see a man parading the streets with a torch in his hand; telling the populace that the combustibles are all ready; and that the

Justice!

*If he means good character, it is impossible
 there should.* con-

conflagration will be sudden and unexpected; they are tender of his rights; so they leave him to proceed, and wait to see what he will do; and when the town is on fire, they try to put it out as well as they can. This was the policy which brought the city of London to the verge of destruction in 1780. Sleeping justice in time of danger; and a dangerous execution of it by the vulgar, are so bad, that it is hard to say which is the worst; yet we might have justified the latter on our Doctor's principles; which are accommodated to the demolition of *churches*, but not of *conventicles*. We might have pleaded, that *old* and *decayed* buildings, maintained at a great *expence*, for purposes of *error* and *superstition*, being *nuisances*, it were better for the *good of the whole*, that they should be removed by the *justice of the people*: Unitarian liberty being an adequate compensation for a *time of calamity*; and a *paradisaical state* upon earth, the *glorious* end of all.

The christian religion fits so easy upon him, that he can droll and sport with the greatest objects of it, in a manner fearful to repeat. Comparing the Arianism of Dr. *Clarke* with the Arianism of Dr. *Price*, he scotfully

scoffingly remarks, that the *diminutive* *logos* of Dr. Price *shrinks into nothing* before the *logos* of Dr. Clarke! (Letters, p. 160.) And of transubstantiation he says—"with what unspeakable reverence and devotion do the Catholics eat their maker." (p. 101.) The Catholics are in error upon this subject; but the subject, in every view of it, is so great, that no serious Christian would treat it with words of contempt. The Heathens frequently mocked at the first and best Christians for *eating their Deity*; stating the doctrine in the same terms of mockery as Dr. Priestley does, because they *felt* the subject as little as they understood it. — — —

x *If they are the best why do not you imitate them?*

Levity upon sacred subjects is bad enough; but blasphemy is worst of all. If christianity is the revelation of God, Jesus Christ is adorable and eternal; the only begotten Son of God, to be honoured by men and angels, as the father himself is honoured; and the time of his appearance is approaching, when the heaven and earth which he created shall fly away before his face. This is the divine Person, concerning whom, Dr. Priestley reflects upon the Church of England for tempting the Dissenters to pay supreme worship to a fellow-

contemptible superstition deserves to be treated with contempt.

How begot?

fellow-creature, to a man like ourselves, (Letters to Dr. Horne, p. 21.) a mere man, the son of Joseph and Mary—naturally as weak, as fallible, and as peccable as other men—possessed of no natural advantages over his father Joseph, or any other man in a similar situation of life in Judæa. (Letters, p. 172.) At Paris, since the date of their illumination, the most hideous blasphemies have been cryed about the streets; (they are a little farther advanced in their way toward paradise than we are) and so great are the liberties taken by Dr. Priestley against divine revelation, that if he had lived in the days of *Oliver Cromwell*, he
 x might have reckoned himself very fortunate.
 x if he had escaped the fate of *James Nailor*.
 The difference between them is no more than this: Dr. P. believes Jesus Christ to have been a *peccable man*: James Nailor believed a peccable man to be *Jesus Christ*. Yet this is the man who writes pastoral letters to students in the university, Methodists, Jews and Emanuelists; who thinks himself a terror to bishops, priests and deacons; and labours to convert all men by the superior excellence of his own persuasion. By *Emanuelists*, I mean the followers of *Emanuel Swedenborg*; who among the other
 gross

x *He narrowly escaped being burnt!*
Gardiner Bonner rejoice!!

gross errors of their new revelation, hold a doctrine in direct opposition to Dr. *Priestley*: the latter, as we see, maintains that Jesus Christ is *a man like ourselves*; but *Swedenborg* taught, that the *humanity* of Christ is *God*; even that God whose name is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost! To shew how mistaken Dr. *Priestley* is in his judgment of things, he has written an address to those people, reminding them how near their doctrine is to his own, and that as they are not much divided, they may as well work together: but the result is, they dislike him as much as he mistakes them: and if both sides argue till doomsday, neither will ever be converted to truth by what the other has to offer.

VI. *Of his Philosophy.*

By many worthy persons who take a side-view of Dr. *Priestley*, he has been celebrated in his capacity of a natural philosopher: and very justly: he is indisputably eminent in inventing and diversifying experiments; such especially as relate to the analysis of the air. Yet, so far as we can see for ourselves, and

D

have

have learned from the sentiments of others, he is by no means so happy in explaining his experiments as in performing them: and in philosophy is found to fluctuate in his principles, much as he does in divinity and politics. The thing is taken different ways. Some, from an admiration of his philosophical abilities, become infected with his religious errors: while others, shocked by the impiety of the latter, become jealous of philosophy altogether, and think the study dangerous; because it is so frequently observed, that philosophy deceives itself, and becomes too proud to be a christian. If the philosophy of Dr. *Priestley* should have tempted him to blasphemy, he would have been a better man without it; and the time may come, when even he himself will wish there had been no such thing upon earth. The *extreme weakness* and *want of sense* in churchmen, are very favourite topics with him: our clergy are universally *bigotted* and *superstitious*, or hypocritical and hardened, for *professing* with the church, and *believing* with Dr. *Priestley*: so they are all contemptible for the one reason or the other: and he accordingly, while he claims the merit of great candour, abuses them

them at his will in his publications. Several years ago, he promised himself so much success from the effect of philosophy in overturning our establishment, that the clergy, he thought, had reason to tremble for the fate of their hierarchy at the sight of an air-pump: though the hierarchy has nothing more to fear from a philosophical apparatus in proper hands, than Dr. Priestley's meeting-house from a bladder of inflammable air. Strange effects do sometimes follow from unexpected causes. Dr. Franklin, who lighted up that fire in *America*, which has now extended with increased fury to *France*, derived much of his influence from the fame he had acquired in philosophy. We hope his brother Doctor, who is neither so *useful* a philosopher, nor so *clear* a writer, will not succeed so well in separating the people of England from their government, as his predecessor did in separating the colonies from the mother country. But he makes a dangerous use of philosophy, when he suggests to young people in our universities, that they should *refuse to receive divinity otherwise than as they receive philosophy* *. And how is that? Do not they re-

* See his letters to them, p. 45.

ceive philosophy on the authority of *man*, and the evidence of experiment? Whereas we receive divinity on the authority of God, and the evidence of Faith; which, as the apostle teaches, is the *evidence of things not seen*; and *things not seen* cannot have the evidence of experiment. If young men proceed as he advises, they will miscarry as he has done: we would therefore warn them to beware of what he has insinuated upon this subject; there being a little too much of the fox in it for them to discover, till they are better informed. What are the present incendiaries of *France*, but a gang of philosophical felons; who, because they could not receive divinity as they received philosophy, have astonished the world with such a scene of absurdity, rapine, murder, and sacrilege, as is not to be found in the annals of man? It seems as if the providence of God intended to shew the world, by their example, to what a deplorable degree of depravity the nature of man may sink, when it despises the lights of religion. As philosophers they began with a sovereign contempt for all mankind but themselves, as poor low creatures of a different species: and what is the consequence of

Did you ever see Air?

Strange Evidence - "My Lord, I believe that man to be a traitor, therefore he is proved one, on the best evidence." Brunster Positive.

of their pride? they themselves are fallen below the nature of man, and are become a spectacle of *inhumanity* to the world: but they are greatly admired by Dr. *Priestley*. The science of philosophy is pleasant, and may be very improving to the mind: but what will a man gain, if he should take philosophy in exchange for his soul? Of this danger Dr. *Purkis* gave very proper and seasonable warning from an university pulpit. But our author objects to his application of St. *Paul's* admonition, to *beware of philosophy*, because, says he, the philosophy intended by the apostle was that of the *Gnostics*; which having long been out of date, no danger is now to be apprehended from it. But in this he asserts what the text will not warrant. St. *Paul* speaks of a philosophy *κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* according to the *elements of the world*; concerning which elements, philosophers of all ages have had variety of *traditions*, and were, as they are now, for ever wrangling and disputing. If this be the sense of *στοιχεῖα*, (as the *margin* gives it) natural philosophy is particularly specified: and if it be not, that kind of philosophy must be included; because we are bid to beware of all but that

which is *after Christ*: and the philosophy in which Dr. *Priestley* has distinguished himself, will certainly not come under that description. The *doctrines* of the Gnostics are dead and gone; but the *spirit* of the Gnostics, a worse thing, is alive still, and in a flourishing state: I mean that vain humour of being thought more *knowing* than other Christians; that affectation of being *wise without book*, and preferring the wild imaginations of their own brain to the wisdom of divine revelation. This is the corrupt *tree* whose fruit poisons the world; and of that fruit, the philosophy of the Gnostics was but an inconsiderable part. The *Gnostic spirit* never displayed itself more than in the whole Socinian system, and particularly in the writings of our present philosopher; who instead of lifting up his mind to the mysteries of the gospel, is for reducing all mysteries to the level of his own understanding; and consequently, he soon finds himself under the necessity of denying them: of which I produce this singular example. *Great is the mystery of godliness*, saith the apostle, *God was manifest in the flesh*, &c. Mysteries, saith the Doctor, *the only mysteries known*
to

what of the Gospel but of
 Priestcraft & fanaticism?

*to the scripture, are things perfectly intelligible: therefore to make this perfectly intelligible, he changes the mystery of the incarnation into the mere fact of speaking by inspiration: God manifest in the flesh, that is, speaking to mankind by the man Christ Jesus *. God was therefore no otherwise manifest in Jesus Christ than in any other prophet by whom he had spoken to mankind; and so Moses or Isaiah were as truly God manifest in the flesh as Jesus Christ. as truly but not in so great a degree.*

His *Gnosticism* is farther apparent in the boastings, which so frequently occur in favour of his own attainments, too surfeiting to be repeated. He has been so accustomed to extravagant and indiscriminate flattery from his brethren and admirers, that he looks upon encomium as his due; and therefore bestows it largely upon himself. Though Mr. Parkhurst, the first Hebrew scholar of the age, has detected him in *palpable errors* in that language, nothing checks him; and he answers it all by telling us, how at eighteen years of age he was able to teach Hebrew.

* Letters to Dr. Horne, &c. p. 67.

Though convicted of illiterate mistakes in Greek by Dr. *Horsley*, and in Latin by Mr. *Badcock*; he still holds out the flag of defiance as before, and gives us to know, (leaving us to *smile if we please*, as we probably *shall*) that as he *would not exchange his knowledge of the Greek with that of Dr. Horsley, so neither would he exchange his knowledge of Hebrew even with that of Mr. Parkhurst**.

ominous I have known many boasters; but not one that was a man of any permanent effect; because this failing betrays such great want of *discretion* and *good manners*. Boldness and importunity will have weight with the ignorant; and the mountebank is often well paid for his bouncings upon a stage at a country market. Sauciness of language to superiors will always give pleasure to the mean and the malicious: and people of common understandings think it impossible that any man should be so confident, unless there is some strength in his cause. But there being *none*, confidence is necessary to supply the defect; and without it some writers could never get forward. It was my fortune to be acquainted

* Letters, p. 187.

with

with a worthy dissenting minister, who having been at the same academy with Dr. Priestley, told me, he was the most conceited youth that ever came amongst them; who thought he then knew every thing; and discovered, in the bud, that same self-sufficient spirit which being now full-blown, and in maturity, rails at doctors, deans and bishops, for the inferiority of their learning. When I call to mind the character of the plain honest man who related this, a person of the old puritanical persuasion; I am sorry to see (being no enemy to *conscientious* dissenters, for many of whom I have great respect, and with whom I have held long acquaintance) a new generation daily increasing upon us, with so little of the faith and piety of their predecessors. I could point out another of their ministers, in a very conspicuous situation, who is orthodox in his belief, and peaceable in his politics: but what shall we say, when such a man is scouted by his brethren, and challenged to name one single minister more among the dissenters, who is of the same opinions with himself? If this be true, they are *all gone out of the way*; and with little chance of returning to it any more, if they
put

put themselves under the direction of Dr. Priestley. *Stile assention, High Church Dogma.*

It has been a matter of wonder to many, how he has been attended to so much as he has been. I heard it observed lately, that he rarely writes a controversial piece without contradicting himself fifty times before he gets to the end of it: which want of consistency will be found in every writer who is without *true principles*. When we see such a man, with abilities so ill directed, riding the understandings of a large party of people, the case seems at first unaccountable: but, if duly considered, it will explain itself; for *parties* will submit to any thing: they have a tame side as well as a wild one: they will bear every thing, and they will bear nothing. Some little time after the riots at *Birmingham*, a Quaker went into a coffee-house of that place; where meeting with a Dissenter, one of the Doctor's abettors, "Well, friend," said he, "how dost thou do now?" "Do?" said the other, "I should do well enough, if we were not priest-ridden." "Friend," said the Quaker, "thou art Priestley-ridden." To this privilege of riding the people, the Doctor

has not one good instance.

an admirable Quakerlike Pun -

tor advanced himself, partly in virtue of the philosophical fame he had so justly acquired: and he might have kept his seat better, had he been more temperate in his politics, and more sound in his divinity. But he incautiously mounted the wrong steed at *Birmingham*; and putting on with more haste than good speed, the beast threw his heels into the air: and it is probable the Doctor will not put his foot into that stirrup any more.

more wit. elegant metaphor.

Whatever degree of popularity he may have acquired with his *party*, he has little reason on that consideration to be high-minded. Popularity is too frequently the reward of base arts and bad principles, and has been bestowed on very bad characters. The famous *Titus Oates*, the son of an Anabaptist teacher and dipper, a pestilent incendiary of the last century, who was whipped from Newgate to Tyburn for perjury, agreed very much with Dr. *Priestley* in some of his religious opinions. The best name he could find for "*Athanasius*" was, that creed-making rascal. He was always delighted, and remarkably active, when mischief of any kind was going forward against the church. In the day of his prosperity,

"a wonderful, when devils speak the truth!" Shakespeare.

he was a personage of such influence, that no man dared to open his mouth against him, for fear of being put into a plot, and either hanged or sent to the Tower; and nearly a whole session of parliament was employed upon him. He assumed the *doctorate*; was served in plate; and had a pension of 600*l*. per annum. His name was as precious then, as that of *Thomas Pain*, ^{*i.e. the swine*} is now, and with the same sort of people, for the same reason, an uncommon disposition and ability to disturb the peace of mankind. Dr. *Priestley* ought to be, and might be, a character very superior to these: he has great merit with natural philosophers for what he has done well, and they have given him at least as much as his due: but his popularity with a party may be accounted for from some other qualifications in which he more nearly resembles *Titus Oates* and *Thomas Pain*. The patriots who rule the floods of sedition in *France*, have honoured our Doctor (as the newspapers report) with *their* testimony, that his principles and his inclinations are up to the high-water mark of republican mischief; and in so doing have given that warning to Englishmen, which none of them can want, who are
in

in any degree acquainted with the spirit of his publications *.

* When Dr. *Priestley* would whet our appetites for a new revolution, he holds out to us the *noble example of America*, and the noble example of *France*, which has grown out of it. But the Americans are not in such an enviable state as he represents, whose judgment is very little to be depended upon. An inquisitive and judicious gentleman, who has lately visited several parts of America, and conversed with people of all ranks, assured me, he found but two persons of character who expressed any interest in the French revolution; and that the French nation is universally held in very low esteem there. In religion, he observed, they are in a poor condition; broken into parties by a sectarian spirit almost universally prevailing, and tending to the extirpation of all solid piety. In the southern provinces, the chief religion is pure deism, called by the name of *philosophy* in *Europe*; which has produced their unbounded tolerations.

In the moral principle, they are certainly not improved; many of them having been induced to favour a separation from this country, with a view to be well rid of their British creditors. The small province of *Virginia* only, owed two millions to the mother country at the beginning of the war; and it is not in my power to shew how much of it has been paid. Their courts, I am told, are to this day not opened for fulfilling the 4th article of the peace, which obliged them to the payment of their debts; and on that very consideration, our government can enter into no commercial negociation with them. It is an universal complaint, that scarce a debt contracted by the American

Roderigo!

*
pure Deism is fully
as good as impure orthodoxy

VII. *The Analysis of Dr. Priestley.*

WHEN a strange phenomenon appears in nature, we are all desirous to account for it. Dr. *Priestley* being a phenomenon in religion and learning, it is natural to look for some solution of him. The excursions of his mind are unbounded ; his versatility is without example ; his obstinacy in argument, inflexible ;

American states is *punctually* discharged: their fraud is co-extensive with their country. Their bubble-bank at New-York, which ruined so many people by a display of false credit, is well known. See *Memoirs of the late Dr. Benjamin Franklin*, p. 62. a very interesting pamphlet, by some person well versed in the subject he has undertaken. In their political state (for it cannot be called a *government*) they find some new advantages ; but nothing to compensate for that peace, order, stability, and respectability, which they enjoyed under the old government ; and they did not spare to say, that upon the whole the *old* was *better*. The gentleman from whom this information was obtained, learned some particulars relating to the conduct of the war, from a leader in it, which were generally suspected in the mother country, but not so well known before upon American testimony. I wish the reader would consult those *Memoirs of Dr. Benjamin Franklin*, where he will find a full detection of the false information that philosopher held out to persons disposed to remove from hence to *America*.

and

and his disposition to disturb the peace of the world, indefatigable; and yet I never heard it offered in excuse for him, that *much learning hath made him mad*. What then are we to say? for his mind must be under some unhappy malady. The proper method of investigation in such a case will be, to learn from past times, *what* men have been, and *why*: and then we shall be better able to understand, what and why they are as we now find them.

In the life of Mr. *Richard Hooker*, by *Isaac Walton*, we have the description of a set of people, such as they discovered themselves on their first appearance in this kingdom; when their portrait was taken by an able hand, and is still preserved in an account of the *opinions and activity of the Nonconformists*; from which I make the following extract. “In which number of Nonconformists, though some might be sincere well-meaning men, whose indiscreet zeal might be so like charity, as thereby to cover a multitude of their errors; yet of this party were many that were possessed with a high degree of *spiritual wickedness*; I mean with an innate restless *pride* and
malice,

malice, and an *opposition to government*: men that joyed to be the authors of misery; which is properly his work who is the *enemy and disturber of mankind*: men whom prejudice and a furious zeal had so blinded, as to make them neither to hear reason, nor adhere to the ways of peace: whom *pride* and *self conceit* had made to overvalue their *own crooked wisdom* so much, as not to be ashamed to hold foolish and unmannerly disputes against those men whom they ought to reverence, and those laws which they ought to obey.—They began with *tender and meek petitions*; then proceeded to *admonitions*; then to *satirical remonstrances*; and at last, having like *Absalom* numbered who was not, and who was for their cause, they got so great a party, that they dared first to *threaten the bishops*, and then the *queen and parliament*.—Men of the slightest learning, and the most ignorant of the common people were mad for a *new*, or *super*, or *re-reformation* of religion; like that man, who would never cease to whet and whet his knife, till there was no steel left to make it useful.”—“ With these the church was pestered; her lands in danger of alienation; her power at least neglected; and her peace torn
to

to pieces by several *schisms*, and by such *heresies* as do usually attend that *sin*. People seemed ambitious of doing those very things that were forbidden, and attended with danger, that so they might be punished, and then applauded and pitied. They called the spirit of opposition a tender conscience, and complained of persecution, because they wanted power to persecute others *." "Clever little Isaac"

Sherridan

The style of *Isaac Walton* is so strong, that a very little of it will be sufficient for our purpose, and prepare us to account for the excentric *appearances* and *motions* of *Dr. Priestley*. He was bred up in what this author, who follows the old fashion, calls the sin of schism: and schism, as we learn from the example before us, begets many other sins; that of *heresy* in particular. Division from the church breeds that *hatred* against the church, which is so conspicuous in *Dr. Priestley*: a secret sense of superiority in the church breeds *envy*: and when *hatred* and *envy* work together, they will produce very strange and alarming effects. *Envy*, wishing

* See *Life of Hooker*, 4th edit. p. 181, or as prefixed to his works.

the church to be as wrong in its *doctrine*, as it is hateful in its *authority*, will soon find it so; first in one article; then in others; and at last in all. From the habit of proving so frequently that the church believes wrong, it will itself at last come to believe nothing. Our author goes to the primitive writers of the christian church; where he might find truth, wisdom, and piety: but he finds what he wishes to find, and what the raven looks for, as he flies croaking through the air, *corruption*. His hatred and envy are attended with that native self-conceit, for the gratifying of which, as *Walton* has worded it, he is *not ashamed to hold foolish and unmannerly disputes against those whom he ought to reverence*. He differs from all, because he would be wiser than all: so he falls into notions of hopeless absurdity, and is at his wits end how to maintain his ground. He is therefore such an heterogeneous composition, as men may well look at with amazement: he is wise and foolish; learned and ignorant; civil and insolent; meek and intolerant; a leader in want of leading-strings; cold-hearted as a philosopher, and hot-headed as a fanatic: and, as the result of all, incorrigible

Self elect.

corrigible in his opinions: with whose evasive logic and unmannerly spirit of detraction no man of character would hold an argument, but for the sake of those who may be in danger from his writings. Mr. Wakefield, who has a fair title to the character of a scholar, and knows a certain person well, laments over him as *almost an angel in wisdom, and all but an idiot in judgment*. I do not carry the *opposition* of the character so high or so low as he does. In those departments of learning, with which Mr. Wakefield is *not* so well acquainted, he allows too much: in those with which he *is* acquainted, he finds him *very deficient*, and *possessed of self-conceit in no ordinary measure*. See his *Short Strictures on Dr. Priestley's Letters*, P. 1. p. 10.

How noble Autocrat! thou possessest no unmanly spirit of Detraction - No No!!

Very Well, Mr Nobody! This is not sophistical Defamation and Slander. —

NOTES on p. 26, and p. 37.

Page 26, line 20. *He turns prophet without his Credentials.*] We have seen it asserted, that Dr. Priestley had predicted the end of the world in fourteen or twenty years. But this matter was not truly represented. In the sermon on the death of Dr. Price, he taught his audience, that they who should die at the end of fourteen, or twenty, or seven years, would at the end of those periods respectively meet Dr. Price: and thus he made it out: that as the soul dies with the body, the interval between any particular person's death and his resurrection, is to be reckoned as nothing; therefore he that should die soonest would soonest meet Dr. Price. Q. E. D.

After this he proceeded to tell them, that the news with which the surviving friends of Dr. Price will entertain him at the Resurrection, will consist of those events, in which while alive he was so much interested. He knew the triumphs of the memorable 14th of July; and as they were so agreeable to his taste, how will he be delighted to hear of the massacre on the 10th of August! &c. &c. *as every good man & spirit ought to be, at the defeat of treachery!*

The idea the Doctor has formed of persons of his own persuasion in a future state is very singular. Such saints, he thinks, will be pleased at the tremendous day of the Resurrection, to hear what rebellions and massacres happened after their death; and enquire with anxiety, perhaps,

haps, whether *England* had been as fortunate in this respect as *France*? But, as the *prospect* is opening wider, he that goes latest to Dr. Price, will have the best news to tell him! *Indecent sneer*

P. 37, l. 17. St. Paul speaks of a philosophy, καὶ τὰ σοῦχαια τῶν κοσμιῶν, &c.] Dr. Priestley has instructed us, that the Apostle here alludes to the philosophy of the Gnostics. But in this, we have an instance of that rashness of judgment, and want of due discrimination, with which he forms his opinions. The name of *Philosophy* was first assumed by *Pythagoras* as a student of nature; and Cicero from *Pythagoras* applies the term to those, *Qui rerum naturam studiose intuerentur*; Tuscul. v. 3. Therefore philosophy in its original sense is *natural Philosophy*; and the philosophers who gave St. Paul a surfeit of their wisdom at Athens, were *Epicureans* and *Stoics*. It does not appear that the word *philosophy* is ever ascribed to any thing in the Scripture but to what the *Heathens* taught. The false teachers who infested the Christian Church, were not called *Philosophers*, but *Heretics* and *Sectaries*; and their teaching was not called philosophy, but διδασχὴ Νικολαϊτῶν; as in the Revelation of St. John.

As for the *Gnostics* in particular, they first began to be distinguished about a hundred and thirty years after the death of our Saviour; and could not be alluded to by St. Paul. So the doctor is every way wrong: and is himself an instance, that the admonition to beware of what then was, and now is, called Philosophy, may be seasonably urged at this time: he having denied the separate existence of the human soul on the ground of certain

There are *Ches* chine as well as *ces* *Naturales*.

Cicero says *Naturam* *Cherum* not *Nes* *naturae*.

tain speculations in Natural Philosophy, which admit of no proof. And it was foreseen and foretold in the last century, that those speculations (being of the *Epicurean School*) would lead Christians to Materialism; which is philosophical *Atbeism*. *Vanini*, who suffered as an Atheist, does not appear to have been guilty of any other.

Atheism may be guilty but it is not for fallible shortsighted man to punish it.

A P P E N D I X.

EXTRACTS from the Works of Dr. Priestley were read in Court at the Assizes at *Warwick*; because, when he applied for the damages he had sustained, no judgment could be formed by the Court of the value of writings which were lost, but from the value of those which remained. They were afterwards printed at *Birmingham*, with the following motto in the title page.

If the opinions and principles in question be evidently subversive of all religion, and of all civil society, they must evidently be false.

[Essay on the First Principles of Government,
by Joseph Priestley, LL.D. p. 121.]

On these Extracts no remarks are added; as the reader, after what has been said, will be prepared to make his own reflexions.

UPON ACTS OF PARLIAMENT.

BUT can an *Act of Parliament* authorize a manifest injustice? And when you are taxed with oppressing your neighbours in exacting of them that, for which you have given them no equivalent, will it be sufficient at the great day of judgment to say, that you had an *Act of Parliament* for doing it?

[Familiar Letters addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham
—page 66, paragraph 3, line 3—published in 1790.]

*Nothing can authorize Injustice - Justice has made her laws
& courts of Jurisprudence must recognise and practise them.*

Will an *Act of Parliament* excuse you in the sight of God, for exacting of any man more than in the eye of reason and equity he ought to pay? If an *Act of Parliament* will not justify the taking men's *lives*, neither will it justify the taking their *money*.

[The same paragraph—line 13.

II. UPON RESISTANCE TO GOVERNMENT.

IF government, though *legal* and *constitutional*, has not made *sufficient* provision for the *happiness* of the *people*, no *other* property, or title by which it may be dignified, ought to shelter it from the *generous* attack of the *noble*, and *daring* patriot.

[Essay on the First Principles of Government, Sect. II. of Political Liberty—page 35, paragraph 2, line 9 to page 36, line—published in 1791.

Governors will never be awed by the *voice* of the *people*, so long as it is a *mere* voice, without *overt* acts.

[Ibid. page 46, 47, paragraph 3, line 24.

III. UPON LIBERTY, CIVIL AND POLITICAL.

CIVIL liberty extends no further than to a *man's* *own* conduct, and signifies the *right* he has *to be* exempt from the *controul* of the *society*, or its *agents*.

[Ibid. Sect. I. of the First Principles of Government and the different kinds of Liberty—p. 9, parag. 2, line 7.

In countries where a man by his birth or fortune is excluded from the supreme offices, or from a power of voting for proper persons to fill them, that man, *whatever* may be the *form* of the government, or *whatever* *civil* liberty or *power* over his *own* *actions* he may have, has no power over those of another, and *therefore* has *no* *political* liberty at all. Nay, his *own* conduct, as far as the society does interfere, is in all cases directed by others.

It may be said, that *no* *society* *upon* *earth* was ever formed in the manner represented above.—I answer, *it is* *true*, because *all* *governments* *whatever* have been, in some measure, compulsory, *tyrannical*, and *oppressive* in their origin; but the method I have

described, *must be* allowed to be the *only free*, and *equitable* method of forming a society; and since *every man retains*, and *can never be deprived* of his *natural right* of relieving himself from all oppression, *that is*, from *every thing that has been imposed upon him* without his consent; *this must be the only true*, and *proper foundation* of all the governments subsisting in the world, and *that, to which the people who compose them, have an unalienable right to bring them back.*

Ibid. Sect. II. page 11, line 7, to page 12, and the end of the second paragraph.

IV. OF LEGAL RESTRAINT UPON HUMAN ACTIONS.

IN truth, the *greater part* of human actions are of such a nature, that *more inconvenience* would follow from their being *fixed by laws*, than from their being left to *every man's arbitrary will.*

[Ibid. Sect. III. of Civil Liberty—p. 52, parag. 2, line 9.

V. OF LEGAL RESTRAINT ON OPINION.

IF a man commit murder, let him be punished as a murderer, and let no regard be paid to his plea of conscience for committing the action; but let not *the opinions which lead to the action be meddled with.*

[Ibid. page 118, line 8.

VI. RELIGION IN GENERAL.

BESIDES, though RELIGION, or the *belief of a God*, a *Providence*, and a *future state*, have its *use* with respect to *society*, it is not absolutely NECESSARY for that purpose.

[Familiar Letters addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham—page 55, paragraph 2, line 1.

VII. THE BISHOPS AND THE INFERIOR CLERGY.

AS to the *Clergy*, we make ourselves perfectly easy about *them*; for should the *Court* once more smile upon *us*, and

should the *Minister of the day* only give a *single nod*, opposition will vanish as by a charm.

[Ibid. page 36, line 10.]

The *Bishops of this reign* would in such a case *instantly* become as those of the *last*; and as to the *inferior Clergy*, they would wheel about as quickly as soldiers on a parade, when the word of command is given them in the presence of the King in St. James's Park.

[Ibid. line 21.]

We are the *sheep*, and (the Clergy) our accusers are the *wolves*, and say *what we will, we must be guilty*.

[Ibid. page 21, paragraph 2, line 18.]

VIII. THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE GOVERNMENT.

WE are now in the situation of the *primitive christians*, as the friends of *reformation* have nothing to expect from *power* or *general favour*, but must look for *every species of abuse and persecution* that the *spirit of the times* will admit of. If even *burning alive* was a sight that the country would now bear, *there exists a spirit* that would inflict that horrid punishment, and with as much cool indifference and savage exultation as in any preceding age of the world.

[Extract from a SERMON preached for the benefit of Hackney College, and quoted by Dr. Priestley in his "Appeal to the Public on the Riots at Birmingham," p. 23, parag. 3, l. 1, to p. 24, l. 12.]

IX. THE KING.

WHAT has been the return for this unquestionable proof of our loyalty and zeal?—Has it secured to us the *gratitude* of the KING?

[Familiar Letters addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham—page 15, parag. 3, line 1.]

Now

Now it has unfortunately happened, that "*another King is arisen who knoweth not Joseph**," or the obligations that *his* family are under. [Ibid. page 14.

Should THE KING, like *Ahasuerus* in the book of *Esther*, vi. 1. *not be able to sleep*, and call upon one of the Lords of his bed-chamber to *read to him out of the book of the records of the Chronicles of the Kings of England*, and should there find who had been the most zealous for the revolution under King William—for the accession of the House of Hanover—for the suppression of the rebellions in 1715 and 1745—and who took *his* part in a late change of administration; and then enquire *what honour and dignity* (ch. vi. 6.) had been done to *his* friends, and the friends of *his* family; and learn, that instead of any thing being done to reward, much had been done to *mortify*, and *punish* them; that to this very day they had been persecuted by lies, and calumnies, *as men whose laws were diverse from those of all other people, and who do not keep the King's laws*, and therefore say, *that it is not for the KING's profit to suffer them* (ch. iii. 8.): poor despised *Mordecai* may be advanced, and some *other* use be made of the gallows that was erected for *him*.

[Ibid. page 36, paragraph 2, line 1.

X. THE AMERICAN FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

THE Americans ventured to do a great deal more than our ancestors at the Revolution, and set a *glorious example* to *France* and the *whole world*.

They formed a *completely new government* on the principles of *equal liberty* and the *rights of men* (as *Dr. Price* expressively and happily said) "WITHOUT NOBLES—WITHOUT BISHOPS—
"and WITHOUT A KING."

[Letters to *Mr. Burke*—page 40, line 3—published in 1791.

* This passage is taken from Scripture.—"Now there arose up a *new King* over Egypt, *which knew not Joseph*."

That *new King* was *Pharaoh*—of all tyrants the most impious and cruel.

XI. THE LATE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE.

BY means of *national debts* the wheels of several European governments are already so much clogged, that it is impossible they should go on much longer. The very Peace Establishment of France could not be kept up any longer; *and the same must soon be the situation of other countries.* All the causes which have operated to the augmentation of these debts, continue to operate; so that *our* approach to THIS GREAT CRISIS in our affairs is not equable, but accelerated.

[Letters to Mr. Burke—page 153, paragraph 2, line 1.

If the condition of *other* nations be as much bettered, as that of France probably will be by her improved system of government, that GREAT CRISIS, dreadful as it appears in prospect, will be a *consummation devoutly to be wished.*

[Ibid. 154, paragraph 2, line 1.

I rejoice to see the warmth with which the cause of orthodoxy, that is, long established opinions, however erroneous, and that of the hierarchy is now taken up by its friends—because, if their system be not well founded, they are only accelerating its destruction. *In fact, they are assisting me in the proper disposal of those trains of gunpowder which have been some time accumulating, and at which they have taken so great an alarm, and which will certainly blow it up at length as suddenly as unexpectedly, and as completely as the overthrow of the late arbitrary government in France.*

[Preface to the Letters to Mr. Burn—page 207 and 208, in the same volume that contains the Familiar Letters to the Inhabitants of Birmingham.

What a contrast is now exhibited between the two rival nations of France and England, and how many Englishmen blush to look upon it!

[Familiar Letters, page 210.

How

How different are the spectacles that are now exhibited in France and in England! Here bigotry has been fostered, and has acquired new strength; there it is almost extinct.

[Preface to the Appeal—page xxiv, note x.]

XII. RIOTS AT BIRMINGHAM.

I. THE KING,

Only in Part exculpated from the Guilt of them.

OF the *two parties* in whose names the outrages at Birmingham were committed, the Church and the King; the latter has IN A GREAT MEASURE *exculpated himself* by his proclamation to apprehend and punish the rioters.

[An Appeal to the Public on the Riots in Birmingham—page 76, paragraph 2, line 1—published in 1792.]

THE BISHOPS.

Considering the part that many of the lower clergy *have acted* in this business, the eyes of the country are now upon the *Bishops*; and their *silence* will be construed into *approbation*.

Ibid. page 75, line 9.

3. THE BISHOP AND CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE.

There are several places in Germany, in which the Catholics and Protestants constantly make use of the same places of public worship. Such an offer on the part of the *Clergy and the Bishop of the diocese*, would have then done them the greatest credit, and *have contributed* very much towards *exculpating* them from having *any share* in the outrage. But this natural and easy method, which would have cost them nothing, not having been done, *they remain without that exculpation*.

[Ibid. page 73.]

4. MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH AT BIRMINGHAM.

Here, instead of *answering* our books, the *members of the Church of England at Birmingham* have *burnt* them, together with *our houses, and places of public worship*.

[Ibid. page 80.]

5. THE

5. THE GREAT BODY OF THE CLERGY, AND THE
FRIENDS OF THE KING.

Having always been an avowed advocate of public liberty, and religion, which led me to write in defence of your late glorious revolution, the GREAT BODY OF THE CLERGY in this country, and many of those who call themselves the FRIENDS OF THE KING, have long been *my* enemies; and in *accomplishing my ruin*, have *not spared* the instruments of that *science*, my application to which gave some *degree of weight* to my labours in another field.

[Appendix to the Appeal—page 156.

Letter to Condorcet, par. 2, l. 7.

The violences were committed by the lower order of the people; but if *the friends of the Church*, and *of the King*, in the higher ranks, had been *in earnest* to suppress the riots, it might, *no doubt*, have been effected before *any* mischief had been done.

Appeal—page 71, line 1.

There was, therefore, at least a *criminal remissness in the friends of the Church*, and *of the King*. But the *clearest facts* shew that there was *more than remissness* on the part of *many* persons of *better condition*, and *nothing that they ever did*, showed a *real disapprobation* of the conduct of the mob, *previous to the demolition of my house*—but only a wish that they should proceed *no further, than that*.

[Ibid. page 71, line 19.

6. THE TOWN AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD OF
BIRMINGHAM.

Making every allowance for the perpetrators and *abettors* of these horrid scenes at the moment, there has been time for reflection, and *compunction* since; and the eyes of the nation, and of all Europe, are open to see what part both *the town*, and *neighbourhood*, and, above all, the Government of the country, will take in the case. On the part of *the town and neighbourhood*, *nothing* favourable to justice has appeared as yet.

[Ibid. page 71, paragraph 2, line 1, to page 72, line 7.

The

The whole town, and neighbourhood therefore must fall under the suspicion of screening the criminals, and therefore of *partaking the guilt*.

[Ibid. page 72, 73.]

7. PROVIDENCE,

Though I had read, and reflected much on the feelings of Christians in a state of *persecution*, and never doubted, but that in ordinary cases their joys far exceeded their sorrows, I could not *know* that they did so to the degree in which I can truly, and I hope *without much vanity* (for in this I mean nothing but the *instruction*, and *encouragement* of my readers) say, that I have lately found it. It is only in trying situations that the full force of *religious principle* is felt, and that its real energy can shew itself. And firmly believing, from the doctrine of *philosophical necessity*, that the hand of God is in all events, and that in all cases men are only *his* instruments—that under *his* sure guidance *all evil* will terminate in *good*—and that nothing so effectually promotes *any good cause* as the *persecution* of its *advocates*, all that *I have suffered*, and all that *I can suffer*, has, in many seasons of the calmest reflection, appeared as nothing, and less than nothing.

I consider this *persecution*, (for so I shall call it, though my enemies will of course consider it as the punishment of my evil deeds, and much less than I deserve) let it be carried to what extent it will, as a certain prognostic of the prevalence of *every great truth* for which *I have contended*; and this *prospect*, together with the idea of *my* being an instrument in the hand of PROVIDENCE of *promoting the spread of important truth by suffering, as well as by acting*, has given me at times such exalted feelings of devotion (mixed, as sentiments of devotion ever will be, with *the purest good-will towards all men, my bitterest enemies* not excepted) as I had but an imperfect idea of before.

[Ibid. page 111, paragraph 2, line 1.]

So fully am I persuaded that more good than evil will result from what has happened to me, that were it in my power I would

not be restored to my former situation. Had the late events not happened, I should of course have wished, and prayed for continuing as I was; for no man, I believe, ever thought himself more happily situated than I did—but PROVIDENCE having now DECLARED ITSELF, I acquiesce, and even REJOICE in the DECISION.

[Ibid. page 113, paragraph 2, line 1.

THE END.



